

LOWRY FAMILY

**An Inventory of their Fonds
in
The Library of the University of British Columbia
Special Collections**

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Title: Lowry Family fonds

Dates of creation: 1911-1993

Physical description: 25 cm. of textual records

Biographical sketch:

Clarence Malcolm Lowry, the fourth son of a Liverpool cotton broker, was born on July 28th, 1909 in Birkenhead, Cheshire, England. By the age of 30, when he had arrived in British Columbia, he had received a B.A. in English from Cambridge University, published a novel and travelled to the United States and Mexico. By this time he had begun work on his major novel, Under the Volcano. In 1940 he married Margerie Bonner. For the next fifteen years he resided primarily in Dollarton, North Vancouver during summer months and Vancouver during the winter as well as travelling abroad before returning to England. His final home was in Sussex, where he died in 1957. From the time he came to British Columbia until his death, Lowry wrote novels, short stories, radio film scripts and poetry.

His parents were Arthur and Evelyn Lowry. His three brothers were Stuart, Wilfrid, and Russell.

Scope and Content:

The fonds consists of subject files created by Russell Lowry on various topics relating to the inter-relationships between Malcolm Lowry and his family. Those files consist mainly of correspondence to Russell Lowry requesting information about Malcolm Lowry and some of his draft replies. In addition, the files contain some inter-family correspondence and financial records as well as three letters written by Malcolm Lowry.

Immediate source of acquisition: purchased from Martin Lowry, son of Russell Lowry, in April, 1998.

Arrangement:

Martin Lowry retained the arrangement created by his father, Russell Lowry. This order has been maintained. General comments on the documents by Martin Lowry has been included in the inventory.

Restrictions: no restrictions were placed on access

GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE DOCUMENTS BY MARTIN LOWRY

FILE LABELLED 'DOCUMENTS OF IMPORTANCE' IN ARL'S WRITING.

(These are much the same selection as those brought to the conference in April 1997, and I'm repeating the comments made then for the record).

Individual documents.

I. From Miss Bell, the nanny who took a job as nurse on a liner (see letterhead) and was about to return. Cited extensively by Bowker in *Pursued by Furies*, pp. 10-11. Probably the earliest letter by ten years, but uncertain status as part of the Lowry 'Corpus'.

II. Two notes from Wilfrid. Comment on freezing water in Caldicott dormitories is interesting. 'Dickensian' conditions survived Dickens by quite a few years.

III. A very typical 'letter home'. Malcolm would be in his last year at Preparatory School. The amount of reading he was covering is significant. The allusion in the first sentences to the improvement in his eye condition is important, as it reveals both the underlying truth of Malcolm's later references and the towering superstructure of fantasy that he built on it.

IV. Curious follow-up to III, from a girlfriend named 'Helen' whom I cannot otherwise identify. Written to Malcolm 16 March, and alluding to his eye condition. Was Malcolm already circulating different versions?

V. Two odd survivals. First an undated postcard from Malcolm's eldest brother Stuart, wishing him luck on departure either for Caldicott or The Leys. The second is a menu card from an event variously called a 'slay' or 'bump supper' which figured largely in English education until the 1960s and celebrated victory in a sporting event. Malcolm would have been in his first year at the Leys. Presence of elder brother Russell on the team is worth noting, as is the reading by the housemaster Mr. Balgarnie - prototype of Mr. Chips. Having a brother on a winning team helped with settling down. The whole occasion should have been a more literary banquet than the recitation of 'The Dying Pig' suggests.

VI. Probably 1926: studies only became available to senior members of a house. This should be read in conjunction with the letters of John Stirland in the 'Bradbrook' file.

VII. St. Catherine's. Date seems to have been pencilled in later and may not represent exact day of composition.

VIII. Stuart Lowry's letter to Russell after Malcolm's funeral. From Russell's papers rather than the Inglewood files, and interesting chiefly for the allusions to the time spent by Arthur and his eldest son in discussing Malcolm's affairs rather than cotton prices.

IX. Two drafts of Russell Lowry's letter to the Liverpool City Librarian, 28 February 1963.

Five letters from Librarian, 5 March 1963-22 November 1973, acknowledging receipt of original and covering early use of the material by Muriel Bradbrook.

BOX-FILE, LABELLED 'ARL ON FAMILY MATTERS'.

The material is wildly disorganised and includes a number of blank sheets plus a folder marked 'Fiches' which seems to consist just of odd notes or jottings. There are, however, seven fairly coherent sections clipped together and headed in a manner that shows ARL tackling the topics in sequence. They are -

A.O. Lowry

Evelyn

Inglewood itself

Malcolm's sex life?

Malcolm, the final years

Lowry Bros.

Sweep up rubbish not already dealt with, as left by the commentators and biographers, especially Day, Kilgath and Davenport.

Though the Malcolm autographs are obviously the most exciting items in the archive, my gut feeling is that these may in the long run prove to be the most important. Together, the seven sections add up to well over 100 manuscript sheets containing personal recollections which are now irreplaceable. How much of this material was passed to biographers - notably Bowker and Bradbrook - I do not know. Draft replies to letters in the other files will probably reveal extensive duplication, and I am not going to take the responsibility of removing any of ARL's notes. I had no idea that ARL ever attempted such a comprehensive family history as this and so far as I know, it is absolutely unique.

BOXFILE LABELLED 'NEWSLETTERS AND SOME CORRESPONDENCE ARISING'.

The sequence of Newsletters and Reviews is incomplete, running from 1977 to 1989. I can see no sign of their being annotated, but in case they are, I think it's best to include them. Also a copy of Canadian Literature 8 (1961).

Enclosed in the boxfile is a small folder file containing letters related (I assume) to articles in the Reviews. Correspondents are -

Cynthia Sugars

'Ralph' (?), evidently a Cambridge contemporary of Malcolm's.

Sheryl Salloum

Ronald Binns

Paul Tiessen

Muriel Bradbrook

Laurence Clipper (with covering letter from Headmaster of the Leys)

Christopher Ackerley

Michael Karwowski

ARL's draft replies (chiefly to Binns) are much better organised than in other

files.

UNMARKED FOLDER FILE, CONTAINING FIVE ENCLOSURES -

A. J. Buston and Company, Accounts 31 August 1945

A. J. Buston and Company, Accounts 28 February, 1947

A. O. Lowry, Dec'd., Estate Accounts 31 March, 1952

Estate of Evelyn Lowry, Deceased, Financial Statements 5 April, 1952

Estate of Evelyn Lowry, Deceased, Financial Statements 5 April, 1953

Estate of Evelyn Lowry, Deceased, Balance sheet as at 6 December 1954.

One covering letter from Charles E Dolby to ARL, 8 March 1955.

(This material is of indirect interest only, but since it does contain allusions that shed light on Malcolm's financial position it ought to be available).

FOLDER LABELLED 'CML ESTATE'.

Contains the 'follow-on' from the previous file, dealing with Malcolm's share of the estate and the legal arrangements made to place it in a trust that allowed him to benefit from the income but not to control the capital. Malcolm's frequent moves of course made this a complicated business, and the most important item is probably a cluster of six letters between SOL (Stuart) and Majorie in the immediate aftermath of Malcolm's death.

FOLDER LABELLED 'BRADBROOK. J. STIRLAND'

21 letters from Muriel Bradbrook, 16 April 1973-12 April 1984, dealing with the preparation of her Malcolm Lowry - his art and early life, and other matters of interest.

8 letters from John Stirland and 1 from the Headmaster of the Leys, dated 30 November 1972- 15 March 1976. These were probably included in this folder because some allude to Professor Bradbrook's planned work. Stirland's letters are deceptively relevant and interesting, as they provide first-hand background on the not very happy realities of English boarding school life between the wars. If not actually 'Mr Chips' himself, he was a contemporary and colleague.

Remainder of the file contains ARL's draft replies - more copious than usual and unsorted. I'm including them in case they provide insights on Professor Bradbrook's use of the material.

FOLDER LABELLED 'BOWKER'

About 50 letters from Gordon Bowker, dated 6 September, 1983 to 27 July, 1993, only six month before ARL's death. Also a number of photocopies relevant to the material and (probably most interesting in the final analysis but most tantalising now) endless jottings by ARL which represent his thoughts on the replies to Bowker. Unfortunately none of the material is in proper sequence and without the proper reference works to hand I dare not try to organise it. There must be a pretty complete literary archive on the assembly of Bowker's Pursued by Furies, and that book would certainly be the best starting point.

FOLDER LABELLED 'ANNE SMITH - "CLOSER LOOK"'. . .

11 letters from Anne Smith on the composition of The Art of Malcolm Lowry, for which ARL wrote a preface. A typed draft of that piece, with a number of ARL's notes thereon, are included. Perhaps the most coherent file in the literary archive.

FOLDER LABELLED 'EVELYN FROM AOL'.

21 letters, varying in length and content but giving the measure of AOL's wanderings and consequent remoteness. Occasional allusions to Malcolm (e.g. in top, undated letter placed in 1931 by ARL) do show that however remote AOL may have been emotionally, he was neither uncaring nor ineffective.

FOLDER LABELLED 'BOYS' LETTERS (Evelyn's hand, I think) MAINLY SOL (ARL'S hand).

I am in two minds about including this, as the letters have only the most distant allusions to Malcolm. But Wilfrid's letters give a good picture of school life and values during WW1, and the rather exaggerated rhetoric which is used everywhere provides a good check on Malcolm's letters to AOL.

FOLDER LABELLED 'FILM'.

This is another difficult folder, containing an extraordinary assortment of odds and ends. The core is of ARL'S notes for and impressions of the interview. There is also a sketch of his, depicting the film crew as seen by him and several much earlier sketches, including pencil portraits of AOL, Evelyn and ARL by Stuart (SOL) and some drawings of ships and planes by ARL (aet. 12). How much of this will interest you? I feel obliged to take the ARL sketches out, as they will certainly be of interest to Mum. But would you like at least a photocopy of the film crew? And what about the SOL portraits?

FOLDER LABELLED 'SHERRILL GRACE' (by me).

9 letters, 15 May 1975-12 May 1991, with ARL drafts in reply. ARL's last note is a depressing one for me, showing him refusing the material which in consequence did not find its way into the first volume of Sursum Corda. All is now included in the 'documents of importance' folder. The letters were scattered in various other folders, notably the 'Bowker file' and the 'Newsletter Boxfile'. I assembled them into a separate folder because both because they form an important archive on the editing of Malcolm's letters, and because they show that ARL's reaction on this occasion was quite untypical of him, and due (I'm sure) to fast declining health.

File List

SUBJECT FILES & SERIES

The subject files were titled, with two exceptions, by Russell Lowry. His order has been maintained.

Documents of importance

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 1-1 | [Bell, Miss] Outgoing letter by a nanny who was a nurse aboard the R.M.S Teutonic. | July 27, 1912 |
| 1-2 | Lowry, Wilfrid Outgoing letter to Malcolm Lowry and postcard to Russell and Malcolm Lowry. | Feb. 11, 1917, n.d. |
| 1-3 | Lowry, Malcolm Outgoing letter to mother and father. | Feb. 5, 1922 |
| 1-4 | Helen Outgoing letter to Malcolm Lowry. | March 16, n.d. |
| 1-5 | Postcard Postcard from Stuart Lowry to Malcolm Lowry . Menu card "West" House 'bump' supper celebrating victory in a field hockey event. | n.d. April 1, 1924 |
| 1-6 | Lowry, Malcolm Outgoing letter to his mother. | [1926] |
| 1-7 | Lowry, Malcolm Outgoing letter to his mother and father. | [1929] |
| 1-8 | Lowry, Stuart Outgoing letter to Russell Lowry after Malcolm Lowry's funeral. | July 18, 1957 16 pp., (5 leaves) |
| 1-9 | Lowry, Russell Outgoing letter to Liverpool City Librarian (2 drafts, original and copy) Incoming letters: Liverpool City Librarian (6) Smith, J. Alderson | 1963-1980 Feb. 28, 1963 1963-1975 1980 |

- 1-9 cont'd...
- | | | |
|------|---|-----------------|
| | Yandle, Anne | 1976 |
| | Royal Liverpool Golf Club | 1975 |
| 1-10 | Postcard | 1931 |
| | To Malcolm Lowry. | |
| | Telegram | n.d. |
| | To Malcolm Lowry. | |
| 1-11 | Lowry, Malcolm | June 14, [1949] |
| | Outgoing letter to [Mr. & Mrs. E.B. Woolfan]. | |
| 1-12 | Lowry, Malcolm | n.d. |
| | Photograph. | |
| 1-13 | Lowry, Mrs. M. | 1979 |
| | Incoming letter from J. Alderson Smith. | |

Russell Lowry on family matters

Handwritten narratives on a variety of topics:

- 1-14 Lowry Bros.
- 1-15 Arthur Lowry
- 1-16 Evelyn Lowry
- 1-17 Inglewood (family home)
- 1-18 Malcolm's Sex Life
- 1-19 Malcolm, the final years -
from the people's point of view, especially the family.
- 1-20 Sweep up rubbish
Criticism of various remarks made by Lowry's biographers,
especially Douglas Day.
- 1-21 Supplementary
- 1-22 Fiches
Notes and jottings.

Newsletters and some correspondence arising

Incoming letters to Russell Lowry regarding:

| | | | |
|------|--|------|---------|
| 1-23 | Malcolm Lowry: | | |
| | Sugars, Cynthia | (2) | 1988 |
| | Ralph | (1) | 1988 |
| | Salloum, Sheryl | (4) | 1986-88 |
| | Bins, Ronald, including drafts of replies | (5) | 1979-81 |
| | Tiessen, Paul, including draft replies | (11) | 1980-89 |
| | Bradbrook, Muriel, including a draft reply | (1) | n.d. |
| | Clipper, Laurence, with a covering letter from the Headmaster of the Leys | (1) | 1976 |
| | Ackerley, Chris | (1) | 1982 |
| | Karkowski, Michael | (1) | 1983 |
| | Grace, Sherrill | (1) | 1990 |
| | Nauman, Uwe | (4) | 1988 |

[Financial Records]

- 1-24 A.J. Buston and Company, Accounts, 31 August, 1995
 A.J. Buston and Company, Accounts, 28 February, 1947
 A.O. Lowry, Deceased, Estate Accounts, 31 March, 1952
 Estate of Evelyn Lowry, Deceased, Financial Statements (3), 1952-1954
 Incoming letter from Charles Dolby to Russell Lowry
 regarding the estate, March 8, 1955.

- 1-(25-28) Clarence Malcolm Lowry Estate 1953-1972
 Correspondence, financial statements and documents
 dealing with Malcolm Lowry's share of the family's
 estate. Folder 1-28 contains 8 letters between Stuart
 Lowry, Marjorie Lowry, and Alderson Smith, in 1957,
 pertaining to Malcolm Lowry's estate.

Bradbrook, Stirland Correspondence:

Contains incoming letters from Muriel Bradbrook to
 Russell Lowry dealing with the preparation of her book,
Malcolm Lowry - his art and early life and other matters
 of interest. The incoming letters of John Stirland and the
 Headmaster of the Leys relate to English boarding school
 life between the wars.

- 1-29 Incoming letters:
 Muriel Bradbrook (21) 1973-1984
 Draft replies from Russell Lowry

Bradbrook, Stirland Correspondence cont'd...

- 1-30 Incoming letters:
- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------|-----------|
| John Stirland | (11) | 1960-1980 |
| B.T. Bellis, Headmaster of the Leys | (1) | 1976 |
- Outgoing letters:
- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|------|
| Draft from Russell Lowry to Stirland | | 1972 |
|--------------------------------------|--|------|

Bowker Correspondence (52) * RESTRICTED TO JULY 5, 2009 1983-1993

Incoming letters from Gordon Bowker to Russell Lowry relating to Malcolm Lowry and the publication of Bowker's biography Pursued by Furies. Draft replies by Russell Lowry and enclosures are included.

The letters, 1983-1993, are mainly between 1984-87.

- 1-31 Incoming letters:
- | | | |
|---------------|------|---------|
| Gordon Bowker | (18) | 1984-85 |
| Mark Gorton | (1) | n.d. |
| Gail Lynch | (1) | 1985 |
- 1-32 Incoming letters:
- | | | |
|---------------|------|-----------|
| Gordon Bowker | (34) | 1984-1993 |
|---------------|------|-----------|

Anne Smith - "Closer Look"

Incoming letters from Anne Smith on the composition of The Art of Malcolm Lowry, for which Russell Lowry wrote a preface.

- 1-33 Incoming letters:
- | | | |
|------------|------|---------|
| Anne Smith | (13) | 1977-78 |
|------------|------|---------|
- Typescript:
- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| Malcolm: A Closer Look by Russell Lowry, 24 p. | | |
|--|--|--|

- 1-34 Evelyn from Arthur Lowry
- | | | |
|---|------|---------------|
| Letters from Arthur Lowry to his wife, Evelyn | (22) | 1911-17[1931] |
| Lowry and one letter to Stuart Lowry | (1) | 1916 |

'Boys' Letters

Letters, mainly from Stuart and Wilfrid Lowry to their parents.

- 1-35 Letters:
- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|------------------------|
| Stuart Lowry to mother | (8) | 1914-15, 1923, n.d. |
| Stuart Lowry to War Office | (1) | 1914 |
| Stuart Lowry to Russell Lowry | (1) | 1914 |

'Boys' Letters cont'd...

- 1-36 Letters:
- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------|---------|
| Wilfrid Lowry to his parents | (16) | 1911-16 |
| Letters and items relating to Wilfrid | (10) | 1913-14 |
| Russell Lowry to father | (1) | 1912 |
| Unidentified | (7) | |
- Film
- Incoming letters to Russell Lowry relating to the National Film Board documentary on Malcolm Lowry; other letters to Russell Lowry; photographs from John Huston's Under the Volcano; Royal Drawing Certificates awarded to Malcolm Lowry, 1920.
- 1-37 Incoming Letters:
- | | | |
|---|-----|------------|
| Consul General of Italy | (3) | 1974 |
| Knudson, Richard L. | (1) | 1973 |
| National Film Board of Canada | (2) | 1975, n.d. |
| Nationwide Investigation Service | (2) | 1975-76 |
| Notes by Russell Lowry | | n.d. |
| Royal Drawing Society Certificates awarded to Clarence Malcolm Lowry | (2) | 1920 |
- 1-38 Typescript:
- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| Press release on John Huston's film, <u>Under the Volcano</u> | | n.d. |
|---|--|------|
- Photographs:
- | | | |
|--|--|------|
| Six prints of scenes from <u>Under the Volcano</u> | | n.d. |
|--|--|------|
- 1-39 Sherrill Grace
- | | | |
|--|-----|---------------|
| Letters from Sherrill Grace to Russell Lowry with draft replies | (9) | 1975, 1987-91 |
|--|-----|---------------|